

YELLOWSTONE RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONSERVATION DISTRICT MEMBERS: Carbon, Custer, Dawson, Park, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, Yellowstone, McKenzie County North Dakota, MACD, RAC Chairman

Meeting Minutes – October 18, 2007 Tele-Conference Call

Members Present: Don Youngbauer, Rosebud CD; Paul Gilbert, Sweet Grass CD; Phil Fox Treasure CD; Tony Barone, Richland CD; Bob Hector, Yellowstone CD; Steve Story, Stillwater CD; Paul Gilbert, Sweet Grass CD; John Moorhouse, YRCDC/RAC; Walter Rolf, Custer CD; Luther Waterland, MACD; and Dave Schwarz, Prairie CD.

Others Present: Jim Robinson, Laurie Zeller, DNRC; Warren Kellogg, NRCS; Mike Penfold, YRF; John Franklin, RAC; Nicole McClain, YRCDC Coordinator; Gay Easton, YCD; Kelly Norwood, Project Assistant and Carol Watts, Custer CD.

Chairman Don Youngbauer called the tele-conference to order at 10:05 am October 18, 2007. Each person announced their name for roll call.

TAC Update: Warren Kellogg gave an update on the process of writing the Russian olive BMP Implementation Strategy. The strategy is currently being reviewed by a small group from the TAC and RAC. A draft will be circulated to the Council prior to their next meeting for discussion.

Warren informed the Council that there is an upcoming FWP workshop “Evaluating the Situation – Planning for the Future Coordinating Habitat Conservation and Restoration in Montana” that will be held November 1, 2007 in Helena. John Moorhouse, Nicole McClain, and Paul Gilbert will tentatively attend to introduce the YRCDC’s position on the Russian olive.

Warren said that the Glendive Position Statement has not changed and he asked if the Council wanted to do further review. The Council advised Warren to do another draft to include some changes to make it more clear and then bring the new draft to a full Council meeting in December.

The Intake Diversion Statement was adopted at the August meeting but some revision needs to be done. An implementation process also needs to be started. Warren asked for help with this; Tony Barone and Orvin Finsaas will help. Jerry Nypen of the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project will also be contacted. Phil Fox will send his comments directly to Warren Kellogg.

The next TAC meeting will be October 24, 2007 in Billings. The 310 demonstration project will be brought to the Yellowstone Conservation District meeting on the morning of the 14th to get their input.

Board Elections: Paul Gilbert nominated Don Youngbauer to remain as Chairman, and for Bob Hector to continue as Vice-Chairman. Nominations closed. Paul Gilbert made a motion that they be elected by unanimous ballot. Dave Schwarz seconded. The motion carried by voice vote. These terms will run through June 30, 2008.

Business meeting: Financial reports were in the packet everyone received. Carol explained that financial reports usually were not done for tele-conferences because they need to be done too far ahead of time in order to be mailed out. The financial statement shows the activity in the account and the grant statement shows expenses and balances in each of the grants. Carol noted that one of the expiration dates was wrong and would be corrected. Carol explained that she had met with Nicole and Kelly and some changes have been made. Paul Gilbert made a motion to accept both reports, Walter Rolf seconded and the motion carried by voice vote.

Don Youngbauer asked if the Council should be requesting more operating money. Laurie Zeller said we could be preparing justification to do so. Nicole noted that other grants may need to be applied for to continue doing outreach, etc. Carol asked if the Council would be comfortable with only six face to face meetings a year. It was the consensus of the Council that more face to face meetings are needed. An operating budget will be presented at the December meeting.

Minutes from the August 29, 2007 meeting at the Confluence were approved with Paul Gilbert making the motion and Tony Barone seconding.

Coordinator’s Report: Nicole stated that she still needs to attend District meetings in Prairie, Dawson and Richland counties. The Council encouraged her to work with the Districts to possibly get the meeting dates changed so she would not have to make three separate trips. It would be advisable to have the Council member ask for the meeting date change.

Nicole did a recap of her travel, annual and sick leave, and upcoming travel and meetings. She requested permission to attend the MACD convention in Bozeman. She will not need lodging. Permission was granted. Nicole said time was set aside for a YRCDC meeting at the convention on November 13 at 7:30pm. She plans for the meeting to be a "meet and greet" type of meeting and the new displays will be available for viewing. Don Youngbauer, Tony Barone, Luther Waterland and Steve Story will be on hand to help. Steve Story made a motion that no mileage or stipend will be paid for this meeting. Luther Waterland seconded and the motion carried by voice vote. Nicole also requested approval to attend the FWP workshop in Helena. She can possibly carpool with John Moorhouse. Permission was granted.

RAC Update: John Moorhouse reported that there will be a demonstration of Russian olive tree removal on the Cole Ranch which is between Hysham and Forsyth on November 7, 2007. Jeff Mosley will use a tree shearer mounted on a skid steer for the project. Treasure CD, Rosebud CD, MSU and the Council are sponsors. In the morning Jeff Mosley will speak on Russian olive trees in the Sander's gym with a free lunch to follow. The demonstration will be in the afternoon. This will be used as an approach to landowners to show them a way to deal with these trees. If successful, it is possible the demonstration can also be held in other areas along the river.

John Moorhouse told the Council that Nicole has found a potential candidate for the RAC. Jerry Hanson of West Billings has sent a letter of interest and one letter of recommendation has also been received. This will come before the Council soon and John recommended that the Council appoint him as a RAC member.

Public outreach meetings are still in the process of being planned.

Vice-Chairman Report: Nicole reported for Bob Hector that the Yellowstone River clean-up project was completed, including the 223 grant. A letter has been received from DNRC stating that the grant was fulfilled.

Chairman's Report: Don Youngbauer stated that the Intake position paper was very critical because it will pull people together on the project and make an impact on future projects.

Strategies for engaging the public through outreach & education will get public support for projects in order to get things done. Don Youngbauer feels that the Council is in a different stage now. For years we have done studies and now we are ready to make recommendations and implement some of the items noted in the recommendations. This will start with education so our main strategy for the next few years will be public outreach.

Don also stated that a work plan for the YRCDC will be developed using the old plan as a template. The old plan will be sent out to Council members for review and comments will be accepted. The Council's input will be needed.

Don would like for the Council to be able to give out awards to acknowledge people for things done to benefit the river. A comment was made that the award would not need to be given out annually. This will be discussed at the December meeting.

John Moorhouse suggested getting the Russian olive statement be presented to the committee at the MACD meeting. Luther thought there would be time to draft a resolution at the November 13th meeting.

Luther Waterland has chose not to run again as a director at MACD and a decision needs to be made concerning his place on the Council. Tony Barone and Don Youngbauer are both on the MACD board. It was decided to let MACD make the decision.

Don Youngbauer reported that there was some concern about the Executive Committee meetings. He stated that the reason the Executive Committee meets before the regular meeting is to help him be organized for the meeting. He stressed that anyone is welcome to attend those meetings. This will be discussed at the December meeting.

MRRIC Report: Dave Schwarz reported that the draft charter for the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Program is done and has been put out for review this month. Dave felt that the meeting was well worth his time and that it was important for the Yellowstone River to be represented as a tributary. Dave will get copies of the draft to Kelly so that each Council member can have a copy.

WRDA Update: Paul Wilkins filled in for Liz Ching and gave the report. He stated that WRDA passed the House and the Senate with a veto proof margin. The Administration has threatened to veto it. It has been enrolled and sent over to the President's desk. Results should be known soon. The CES study and the Intake provision are included. The intent is to use the money for restoration projects, including the ongoing LiDAR mapping. This is authorization to spend the money, there is no money attached. It will still be necessary to go through the appropriations process.

Don Youngbauer suggested that the Council find a new project to use some of the money, and added this item to the December agenda.

Public Comment: Paul Gilbert expressed concern about the representation from Park CD on the Council and Nicole offered to attend one of their next meetings.

The next meeting of the Council will be Thursday December 13, 2007. The TAC is scheduled to meet on October 24 in Billings.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Watts